

8.c.

Frequent Grading Comments

These are the most common comments I make regarding the structure, logic, and argument of your paper. If you see "C1" beside a paragraph, you can refer to the corresponding comment on this sheet.

A. INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

1. The paragraph is too general. You talk about many big issues rather than work towards presenting your thesis. As a result, key terms in your thesis statement are left undefined. Think hard about your thesis: What key concepts are most important to define? What information will the reader find necessary to understand the thesis?
2. The argument in this thesis is too simple and obvious. The thesis does little to move beyond your introduction. It doesn't make an argument that will require you to develop your paper. You need to ask a question about your sources to which you did know the answer before you began your research.
3. This thesis is not specific enough. Can you tell me more exactly and specifically *how and why something happened?* Perhaps it would help to break down this general thesis into components: did things change over time? By region? What are the different *parts* of this argument?
4. I cannot identify the thesis here. Can you modify this thesis to tell why or how something happened?
5. This thesis has vague terms. What exactly do you mean by the terms I underlined? By clarifying them, you will give me a better and more specific sense of what your argument entails.

B. TOPIC SENTENCES

1. This topic sentence is true, but doesn't seem to support your thesis. In part, this is because your thesis requires clarification.

2. This topic sentence is true, but doesn't seem to support your thesis. Can you relate it more clearly to your thesis?
3. How did we get from the last paragraph to this one? You need a transition (either in last sentence of preceding paragraph or in this topic sentence) to tell the reader why you're moving on to this new topic.
4. This paragraph has no topic sentence, or one that does not seem to have a "mini-thesis" that supports your thesis.
5. Primary source evidence generally should not appear in the topic sentence.
6. The first sentence of this paragraph does not look like a topic sentence, which should relate back to your thesis. How does this advance your argument?

C. USE OF EVIDENCE

1. This quote is "plopped in." It appears without being integrated into a sentence.
2. This quote is not properly integrated into your prose.
3. Regarding this quote, who said this, and why?
4. This quote needs more context to make sense.
5. This quote is not analyzed. You must explain to your reader exactly how this quote supports your topic sentence or argument.
6. This quote is too long, or is a block quote. Avoid block quotes. Break up and paraphrase long quotes, omitting everything extraneous.

D. PARAGRAPHS

1. You simply need more evidence to support your point in this paragraph.
2. There is evidence in this paragraph, but it doesn't seem to support your point.
3. This is a good concluding sentence to your paragraph (it nicely sums up its argument), but the paragraph needs more evidence to support this conclusion.

4. This paragraph needs a concluding sentence to sum up the argument here, and perhaps provide a transition to the next paragraph.
5. Link this paragraph back to your thesis statement. How exactly does it support your argument or clarify your thesis?
6. This paragraph does not seem to support a thesis. What is its purpose in your paper?

E. LOGIC AND ARGUMENT

1. You used this term earlier, but in a different way. You need to clearly define this term at the outset (probably the first paragraph) and use it clearly and consistently thereafter.
2. We've seen parts of this argument earlier in this paper. Re-structure so that you are not jumping back and forth between arguments. Argue each "mini-thesis" in only one place, then move on.
3. This argument is too general. It cannot be correct, because there are too many possible exceptions to it. Be more specific.
4. There are easy counter-arguments to this position. You need to address and deflect them.